

****Note: The schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.**

Culture and Communication LOYC 340/2 – Fall 2019

Instructor: Philip Szporer

Thursday 11:45-14:30 Room: CC-204

email: philip.szporer@gmail.com

Office Hours: by appointment only, Thursday, 10:00-11:30 (office location: CC 326)

I would like to acknowledge that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today.¹

Objectives

This course is an anthropological approach to variations in cultural experience as they relate to communication. Students explore modes of expression and communication, including performance and visual culture, with a view to examining questions of interpretation, aesthetics, and ethical judgment. The class is intended to develop an awareness of the role of imagination and creativity in expression and interpretation, and sensitivity to the role of cultural and other differences in processes of communication.

Teaching Philosophy and Learning Outcomes

As an instructor, my first commitment is to you; my intention is to create a vibrant, engaging learning experience. I am committed to being accessible to you as a learning resource, facilitator, and guide. Furthermore, I am dedicated to a collaborative and comfortable learning environment, which is a cooperative effort between you and me.

The course aims to engage students in personal ways. You should be able to formulate your thoughts, questions and criticisms in a well-organized and articulate manner, express those perspectives clearly and concisely in your written assignments, as well as share them in class with the instructor and fellow students.

Course Text(s)

There is no course text. Readings are posted on the library's Course Reserves list; navigate to main page of the Concordia Libraries page, click on the Course Reserves tab, then fill in your net name and password. Selections are listed under "LOYC 340". Alternately, on the Moodle page, look for the "Access Course Reserves" tab.

Course Design

Participation is essential. Throughout the course, students will be challenged to articulate their own critical analysis and response through active discussion and written assignments, as well as an oral presentation. In every class, students are expected to come prepared to

¹ Concordia University's Indigenous Directions Leadership Group created this territorial acknowledgement (2017). To read the entire territorial acknowledgement and learn more about why it was written this way, please visit <https://www.concordia.ca/about/indigenous/territorial-acknowledgement.html>.

discuss and respond to the readings and other material (video excerpts) presented during the lecture. Written assignments are based upon individual research work and reflection.

Grading Breakdown

Participation	10%
Moodle entries (8)	10% (8 entries @ 1.25 points each)
Commentary	5%
Cultural Identity Paper	10%
Walking journal	20% (first instalment - 5%; second instalment 15%)
Pecha Kucha presentation	15%
Response essay (Cressey)	15%
Response essay (Désir)	15%

Details about the assignments

• Moodle reaction entries

Prior to every Thursday class, on specific weeks, students will enter one reaction (about one paragraph) on the course Moodle site, based on one of the readings for that week, unless otherwise noted. Only eight (8) entries are required per student, each valued at 1.25 points. Goal: react critically to the readings. The substance of your entry will, more than likely, focus in on one particular issue. The process of writing in this manner helps students to process the material, and ensures preparedness for the class discussion. (10 points)

• Moodle commentaries

There will be a single short 100-word commentary. Always employ citations, where warranted. Submit your work on the Wednesday preceding class through a specific forum located on the Moodle site. Due: November 14. (5 points)

• Cultural Identity Paper

Let's start by examining the effect of culture on ourselves. Write a 2-page (500 word) paper that critically analyzes your cultural identity. Examine how you communicate your identity to others, and how your identity influences your relationship with others as well. Due: September 12. (10 points)

Typed, double-space

• Response essays

Two (2) response essays (3 pages - 750 words maximum) are due. The papers are designed to focus attention on critical issues based on course readings and visual materials, and class discussions. These assignments provide a vehicle for clarifying your thoughts. They may be written as a series of comments, meditations or personal reflections on the readings. Typed, doubled-spaced (reasonable font size). Hard copy. Always employ citations, where warranted. Due: October 3 and October 17. (15 points each)

Typed, double space

• Walking Journal/Scrapbook

An assignment about wandering, thinking, and walking, and our shared fascination of landscapes, places and narratives of sites. Find what you don't know what you're looking for, as writer Rebecca Solnit says. How does this walk give you time to pay attention to every movement of your body, as well as others, and their relationship with their surroundings? What is your chosen walk's relationship to culture and politics? Share perspectives on the walker's experience of walking, and how has it been impacted by the walker's social identities. Tell the stories about the people and places inhabiting your walk.

Why am I assigning a journal/scrapbook? Over the years the number one issue that I hear from students is that they do not receive enough of a holistic assessment of their work in a course. The scrapbook you create will be the vehicle for just such an assessment. It will also give you the opportunity to see the course as a whole, rather than as a series of disconnected assignments—as too many courses often seem to be.

This assignment can be used to get students to experiment with various writing styles, including narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive. Scrapbooking or journaling also integrates visual literacy by requiring students to combine words and images.

Decide on a format for your scrapbook. This is entirely up to you. Your scrapbook could look like a traditional family scrapbook or journal; it could be a digital creation, or anything in between. What matters is that I can access it, read it, and grade it. The content is first and foremost, complemented by a well-conceived aesthetic approach.

Further details on the journal/scrapbook will be provided separately. Note: students are required to meet with me during Week 7 to identify the progress of the scrapbook assignment. A schedule will be provided with meeting times.

• Pecha Kucha-Styled Presentation

Give a brief talk based on the theme of your walking experience or subject, and critically present the findings within the constraints of the pecha kucha-styled format.

* Parameters for the projects will be discussed in class during week 1-2.

~~In consultation with the instructor, prepare a four-minute (4) presentation.~~ Speak either from notes or from a fully articulated text but either way please bear in mind the time limit and be as succinct as possible in your handling of your material. The images advance and you talk along to the images. Each four-minute presentation will consist of no more than four (4) images. No composite images allowed. Please bear in mind the constraints of time: you will be stopped once you reach the four-minute mark.

Note: An accompanying journal/scrapbook will be handed in on the date of your presentation (November 28.) Please employ citations, as required. Hard copy.

Checklist

- The better the presentation and discussion, the better the learning outcome for all.
- Be imaginative.
- The main points of your argument should be coherent and clearly expressed.
- Think about how you are going to divide the time allocated for your presentation.
- Evaluations will consider both the quality of content and the efficacy of the presentation.
- Presentations must be conducted in English.

Participation guidelines

Thoughtful and intelligent participation in all class discussion is, of course, encouraged; however, it is the consistency and quality of one's in-class (and, secondarily, online) participation that will be assessed, not the quantity of your exchange.

For an 'A'-level Participation mark, the student:

It will be a digital creation
due to
our
current
realities,
but
, or
anything
else.
via Zoom
style, or
facetime

- Attends all classes
- Pays attention
- Volunteers questions or points of interest from films and assigned readings to generate discussion
- Offers ideas willingly and makes thoughtful contributions in discussion
- Responds to other students' ideas by asking questions or building on their points

Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions. Attendance will be monitored, but not graded, at the beginning of every class. Note: if you have a justified absence or a bona fide documented emergency (for example, illness, injury, hospitalization) Please advise early in the term if you are observing religious holidays. Personal travel is not an acceptable reason.

Please come to class prepared to discuss the week's reading and/or assignment. Your participation during class is crucial to learning and understanding the course material. "Participation" does not mean simply speaking a lot. The content, quality, and depth of your participation are more important than how many times a week you speak. At the same time, showing that you are constantly engaged in our class discussions is important. This class is run somewhat like a seminar/workshop, which means that while I do give lectures and assignments, I also expect you to engage with the material and to be ready to share about how your experiences relate to the class material. The more you are able to share that understanding, the more other students and yourself will benefit from our discussions, and the better you will do in the class.

Note: Due to the nature of this course's subject matter, sharing your thoughts is truly an important and critical part of the class. For those of you who may dislike participating in large groups or spontaneous participation, there are several options that I am happy to work out with you—please send me an email or talk to me after class. If you are at all concerned about participation, please see me early in the semester, ideally in office hours, to talk about this.

Student participation is important given the applied nature of the course and the emphasis on peer collaboration. The course depends on your active engagement and the mutual support of all the students enrolled in the class. I will monitor student participation throughout the course and reserve the right to deduct marks from students who display a discernable lack of collegiality and cooperation.

Here is a rough guide that will help you understand how you will be assessed for your participation grade:

- Say little or nothing: 0-3
- Participate occasionally: 4-7
- Engage in discussion and the class materials, listen attentively, and what you have to say is demonstrably informed by the course readings and screenings: 8-10

University policies

1) Drop/withdrawal. Deadline for withdrawal with tuition refund from fall-term courses (DNE), is Monday, September 16; the last day for academic withdrawal from this class is Monday, November 4. Please check the academic calendar for more information pertaining

to dropping and withdrawing from a course. Withdrawing from a course and other matters of registration are the student's responsibility.

2) Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty: The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism, which the Code defines as "**the presentation of the work of another person as one's own or without proper acknowledgement**" (Article 16^a).

This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, Internet sites, professor's course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, for example, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone – it can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. "Presentation" is not limited to written work. It also includes oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. If you translate the work of another person into French or English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism. If you cite your own work without the correct citation, this too is plagiarism.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty and to ensure you avoid committing any offenses by reading the University's Academic Code of Conduct:

<http://www.concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity/plagiarism.html>

3) Content Accommodation Policy

Some students may find some of the materials, presentations, lectures, discussions, and audio/visual materials assigned for this class controversial or in conflict with their core values. It is your responsibility to review the syllabus, readings, assignments, and materials to be sure that this is a course you wish to take. Should you have questions or concerns, please see me.

4) Concordia Grading System

90-100	A+	4.3
85-89	A	4.0
80-84	A-	3.7
77-79	B+	3.3
73-76	B	2.7
70-72	B-	2.5
67-69	C+	2.3
63-66	C	2.0
60-62	C-	1.7
57-59	D+	1.3
53-56	D	1.0
50-52	D-	0.7

Other Course Policies

1) Course Material: It is essential that you complete the reading assignments so that you are prepared to participate in class activities and discussions. You are accountable for material covered in the reading material, as well as course discussions and lectures. The readings will be used to launch and inform our discussions and activities for the day. You are

expected to come class prepared. This means not only reading, but also thinking about the readings. What will you contribute each day of class? If you do not understand the material, try to focus on one problematic aspect and consider why you do not understand (is it the author's writing, a word or the way it's used, an unfamiliar concept?) or focus on an aspect that you do understand and consider how it related to the rest of the text.

2) Policy for Writing Evaluation: Students are evaluated on their mastery of language skills. To receive the best grade, you must

- Demonstrate maturity and originality of thought reflected by the ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate.
- Sustain the development of a point or idea over the length of the assignment.
- Use organized paragraphs and transitional devices.
- Make conventional use of capitalization and punctuation.
- Use consistently the grammar, syntax and spelling of standard English or French, with particular attention to sentence structure and to agreement between subjects, verbs, pronouns and antecedents.

Assignments may be written in French or English. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, with a clear font size, paginated, and include your name, a title, as well as proper citations/references, bibliography, filmography/videography. Grades are based on clarity of expression, observational, descriptive and analytic skills, research methods, references, footnotes and bibliography.

All assignments must be handed in hard copy, and not sent via e-mail. E-mailed assignments will only be accepted in cases of grave illness or circumstance.

3) Language: The language of instruction is English. You may submit your written work in French; however, my comments on your papers will normally be in English.

4) Electronic Equipment: Turn off and put away all electronic devices, i.e., mobile phones, iPods, videogames, etc. This class is not the place to check Facebook, surf, text-message, or engage in other distracting and disruptive behaviour with electronic devices. Save it for after class. If there is a legitimate reason you must leave your mobile phone on, please notify me in advance, put the phone on vibrate mode, and sit in the front row on the aisle so you can easily depart the class to take your urgent call. Students breaching this policy during the lecture will be penalized on their participation grades, including a possible grade of zero, at the discretion of the course instructor. Please take this warning seriously.

Tip: To do well on this course it is recommended that you listen attentively, taking notes with a notebook and pen or pencil. Using a laptop, while it does work better for some note takers, is always a source of potential distraction for even the best-intentioned student. Recent studies have also demonstrated that taking notes longhand (vs. on a laptop) results in consistently higher levels of knowledge retention and therefore higher evaluation scores among university students.

5) Food: No eating in class. Take care of hunger before the session.

6) Chatting in class: Please refrain from distracting chatting with your neighbours, out of respect for other students and the professor. Save conversations until break-time or when

the class is over.

7) Names and Pronouns: If you go by a different name or gender pronoun than the one under which you are officially enrolled, please inform me. Students are expected to respectfully refer to each other by preferred names and pronouns during class discussions.

8) Lateness policy

Please note that it is exceedingly disruptive to arrive late to class. Should you end up arriving late to the lecture, or if your body demands that you leave the room temporarily, please try to be as discrete as possible in order not to disturb your fellow students. Do this by holding the door gently as it closes rather than letting it bang shut on its own. If there are reasonable grounds to be absent for part of the class, please advise me of your situation; it is your responsibility to take the necessary measures to arrive on campus early enough.

Late work is not encouraged. All work should be completed by the dates given in the syllabus or the dates we have agreed to as a class. If you have a valid reason for postponing assignment submissions, such as a death in the family or a serious illness, please contact me (or Rebecca Tittler, the Department Coordinator), and we'll arrange a reasonable alternative. Otherwise, a point will be deducted for each day the paper is late (i.e., 1 point, etc.).

9) Monitor Our Moodle Page

Our course will use Moodle as a place to store and keep important course documents, and have informal discussions. You should regularly check our Moodle page throughout the semester (at least twice a week would be great!). To do this, go to <https://moodle.concordia.ca/moodle/login/index.php> and type in your student ID and password. Select the appropriate course and you'll find our home page. Through this page, you will find our syllabus, assignment descriptions, class announcements, and other class materials.

Campus Resources

Students with Disabilities: Students with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychological, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations is encouraged to contact the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities at the beginning of the semester. <http://www.concordia.ca/students/accessibility.html>

Student Success Centre: Will assist in improving your academic skills and learning potential (including reading and writing skills). <http://www.concordia.ca/students/success/learning-support.html>

Weekly topics and readings (subject to change)

Week 1 – September 5

Introduction – The course syllabus will be discussed

+

Lecture: Creating Culture

Reading:

Cynthia Freeland, "Blood and Beauty," in *But Is It Art? An Introduction to Art Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 1-29.

Week 2 – September 12

We will determine early whether you view the lecture in person or online or understand it as you do.

The Body Politic

Readings:

Helen Thomas, "The Body in Culture: the Body Project" in *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 34-63.

Anthony Synnott, "Body," in *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self, and Society*. (London: New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 7-37.

Alan Peterson, "The Body in Question: An Introduction," in *The Body in Question: A Socio-cultural Approach* (Abingdon, Oxon: New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1-19.

Sohail Inayatullah, "Eliminating Future Shock," *Futurist.com*, Sept. 12, 2006.

Colloque Cybercorporéités: subjectivités nomades en contexte numérique

Michelle Calka, "Polymediation: The Relationship Between Self and Media" in *Beyond New Media: Discourse and Critique in a Polymediated Age*, ed. Art Herbig, Andrew F. Herrmann, Adam W. Tyma (Lanham [Maryland]: Lexington Books, 2015), 15-30.

>> Assignment: Cultural Identity paper, due: September 12. Critically analyze your cultural identity. (10 points)

Week 3 – September 19

Expression and Interpretation/Art as Experience

Readings:

John Dewey, "The Act of Expression," in *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigree Books, 1980), p. 58-81.

Richard Shusterman, "Beneath Interpretation," Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), p. 115-138.

Susanne Shawyer, "Occupy Newfoundland and the Dramaturgy of Endurance," *Canadian Theatre Review*, Vol. 157, Winter 2014, 7-11.

Saphinaz-Amal Naguib, "Engaged Ephemeral Art: Street Art and the Egyptian Arab Spring," *Transcultural Studies* (2016: 2), 53-88.

Week 4 – September 26

The Street and Public Spaces

Guest speaker: Jen Cressey, researcher. Topic: Embodied Conversation in Public Space.

"Through physical theatre performance, what can be understood about a site's ineffable essence, its properties and values? Can we learn whether it serves its constituents, and why? Might these techniques be used by non-performer communities to explore and reveal their shared spaces, inscribing them with renewed meaning?" – Jen Cressey

Readings:

Adam Gopnik, "The Mindful Museum," *The Walrus*, June 4, 2007, 89.

Kate Thomas, "Ideas Under Glass," *Literary Review of Canada*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 25-27.

Alessandra Nicifero, "Occupy MOMA: The (Risks and) Potentials of a Musée de la danse," *Dance Research Journal*, Volume 46, Number 3, December 2014, 32-44.

Corey Schnobrich, "Public and Publics: the Occupy Movement," *On-Site Review*, 30 (Fall 2013), 13-17.

Week 5 – October 3

Resistance and Resilience

Excursion: On-site studio visit with contemporary dance artist Rhodnie Désir, in rehearsal for her upcoming show, *Retrospek*, a cumulative re-vision of her internationally acclaimed work, *Bow't Trail*. Place: to be determined.

>> Assignment: Response essay, due: October 3. Write about your experience of last week's guest lecture with Jen Cressey, and specifically ideas about public space. (15 points)

Week 6 – October 10

Walking in the World

Readings:

Cecilia Langström, "Activating Imaginative Attention and Creating Observant Moments in the Everyday Through the Art of Walking," *Nordic Theatre Studies*, 27:2, 60-75.

Sharanya, "A Manifesto to Decolonize Walking," *Performance Research* 22:3 (May 2017), 85-88.

Philip Szporer, "Walking on Walls: Shifting Perspectives in a Post-Modern World," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*: Vol. 7:1 (April 2019), 109-116.

Screening: *Walking*, Ryan Larkin (National Film Board of Canada)

Week 7 – October 17

The Sensuous Body + The Science of Emotions

Readings:

Adam Gopnick, "Feel Me," *The New Yorker*, May 16, 2016.

David Abram, "The Forgetting and Remembering of the Air," in *The Spell of the Sensuous: Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Vintage, 1996), p. 225-260.

>>Assignment: Response essay, due October 17. Respond to Rhodnie Désir's studio presentation and talk. (15 points)

Note – Tuesday, October 15 and Thursday, October 17: Meetings re Walking Journals - book a session during my office hours prior to or immediately after class. (5 points, first instalment of journal)

Week 8 – October 24

Race and Representation

Readings:

Laina Dawes, "The True Colours of Zines," *Broken Pencil*, 2013, Issue 61, 14-17.

John Lahr, "Under the Skin," *New Yorker*, 28 June 1993 (Vol. 69 Issue 19), 90-93.

Zadie Smith, "Who Owns Black Pain?" *Harper's*, July 2017 (Vol. 335, no. 2006), 85-89.

Robin D'Angelo, "White Fragility," *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 2011 (3:3), 54-70.

Week 9 – October 31

Cultural Identities

Readings:

Trinh T. Minh-ha, "A Minute Too Long" in *When the Moon Waxes Red* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 107-116.

Barbara Browning, "Choreographing Postcoloniality: Reflections on the passing of Edward Saïd," *Dance Research Journal*, 35/36, (2/1), 164-169.

Julien Naggar, "Rehearsing Oppression," *alt.theatre*, Vol. 10 No. 2 (Winter 2013), 20-23.

Week 10 – November 7

Cultural Appropriation

Required Reading:

Joseph Boyden, "My Name is Joseph Boyden," Maclean's (Aug. 2, 2017)

Readings:

Kathryn Prince, "Assimilating Shakespeare in the National Arts Centre's Algonquin *King Lear*," *alt.theatre*, vol. 10 no. 2, 20-23.

Jacqueline Shea Murphy, "Introduction," in *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), pp. 1-26.

David Williams, "Remembering the Others That Are Us" in *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, ed. Patrice Pavis (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 67-78.

Week 11 – November 14

Footprints

Screening: Gringo Trails will be shown in class.

Readings:

Lenore Metrick, "Disjunctions in Nature and Culture: Andy Goldsworthy," *Sculpture*, Vol. 22, No. 5 (June 2003), 29-33.

Laura Kenins, "Escapists and Jet Setters: Residencies and Sustainability," *C Magazine*, 119: Autumn 2013, 8-14.

>> Assignment: Moodle commentary, due: Wednesday, Nov. 14 - submit through the

Moodle page. Provide an example of street poster art and its placement in an urban environment, and comment on how this space creates a place for a discussion of issues that the world now must confront (250 words). Give a link to the image or embed it into your post. (5 points)

100 - 250

Week 12 – November 21

Screening: *Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy: Working with Time* will be shown in class.

+

Independent Study

Week 13 – November 28

In Class Presentations



>> Assignment: Pecha Kucha-styled presentations + scrapbook/journal on your walking practice. Note: All elements of today's assignment are due. (15 points, presentation; 15 points, final journal/scrapbook)